

**AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS**

The following is a detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the Application.

1-39. (Canceled).

40. (Currently amended) A computer-implemented method for describing user preferences, the method comprising:

storing a multiple level hierarchical data structure for describing user preferences related to multimedia content, the hierarchical data structure ~~including~~ having a tree structure that includes two or more parent preference objects, wherein each of the two or more parent preference objects is a container for a corresponding plurality of child preference objects in the tree structure of the hierarchical data structure, each child preference object representing at least one content description element describing multimedia content; and

assigning a respective preference value to each of the two or more parent preference objects to characterize user preference for the combination of the content description elements represented by the corresponding plurality of child preference objects.

41. (Previously presented) The method of claim 54, wherein one of the two or more parent preference objects has a first child preference object in the corresponding plurality of child preference objects, the first child preference object representing a first content description element, the method further comprising:

assigning a first preference value to the first child preference object to characterize user preference for the first content description element alone.

42. (Previously presented) The method of claim 41, wherein generating the user profile includes specifying the first preference value for the first child preference object.

43. (Previously presented) The method of claim 54, wherein generating the user profile includes designating the hierarchical data structure to be used in searching or filtering multimedia content.

44. (Previously presented) The method of claim 40, wherein one or more of the content description elements identify a genre, a director or an actor.

45. (Previously presented) The method of claim 40, wherein assigning a respective preference value to each of the two or more parent preference objects includes assigning the respective preference value based on a user's access pattern to multimedia content.

46. (Previously presented) The method of claim 40, wherein assigning a respective preference value to each of the two or more parent preference objects includes assigning the respective preference value based on user input.

47. (Currently amended) A software product, tangibly embodied in an information carrier, for describing user preferences, the software product comprising instructions to cause data processing apparatus to perform operations comprising:

storing a multiple level hierarchical data structure for describing user preferences related to multimedia content, the hierarchical data structure ~~including~~ having a tree structure that includes two or more parent preference objects, wherein each of the two or more parent preference objects is a container for a corresponding plurality of child preference objects in the tree structure of the hierarchical data structure, each child preference object representing at least one content description element describing multimedia content; and

assigning a respective preference value to each of the two or more parent preference objects to characterize user preference for the combination of the content description

elements represented by the corresponding plurality of child preference objects.

48. (Previously presented) The software product of claim 56, wherein one of the two or more parent preference objects has a first child preference object in the corresponding plurality of child preference objects, the first child preference object representing a first content description element, the software product further comprising instructions to cause data processing apparatus to perform operations comprising:

assigning a first preference value to the first child preference object to characterize user preference for the first content description element alone.

49. (Previously presented) The software product of claim 48, wherein generating the user profile includes specifying the first preference value for the first child preference object.

50. (Previously presented) The software product of claim 56, wherein generating the user profile includes designating the hierarchical data structure to be used in searching or filtering multimedia content.

51. (Previously presented) The software product of claim 47, wherein one or more of the content description elements identify a genre, a director or an actor.

52. (Previously presented) The software product of claim 47, wherein assigning a respective preference value to each of the two or more parent preference objects includes assigning the respective preference value based on a user's access pattern to multimedia content.

53. (Previously presented) The software product of claim 47, wherein assigning a respective preference value to each of the two or more parent preference objects includes assigning the respective preference value based on user input.

54. (Previously presented) The method of claim 40, wherein storing the hierarchical structure includes generating a user profile that includes the hierarchical data structure and specifies the respective preference value for each of the two or more parent preference objects.

55. (Previously presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the hierarchical data structure includes the two or more parent preference objects at the same level of hierarchy.

56. (Previously presented) The software product of claim 47, wherein storing the hierarchical structure includes generating a user profile that includes the hierarchical data structure and specifies the respective preference value for each of the two or more parent preference objects.

57. (Previously presented) The software product of claim 47, wherein the hierarchical data structure includes the two or more parent preference objects at the same level of hierarchy.

58. (Currently amended) A computer-implemented method for processing user preferences, the method comprising:

generating a user profile that includes a hierarchical data structure for describing user preferences related to multimedia content, the hierarchical data structure ~~including~~ has a tree structure that includes a parent preference object and a plurality of child preference objects,

wherein the parent preference object is a container for the child preference objects in the tree structure of the hierarchical data structure, and each child preference object represents at least one content description element describing multimedia content;

assigning a first preference value to the parent preference object to characterize user preference for the combination of the content description elements represented by the plurality of child preference objects; and

assigning a respective preference value to each child preference object to characterize user preference for the content description element represented by that child preference object.

59. (Previously presented) The computer implemented method of claim 58, further comprising storing the user profile with the assigned preference values.